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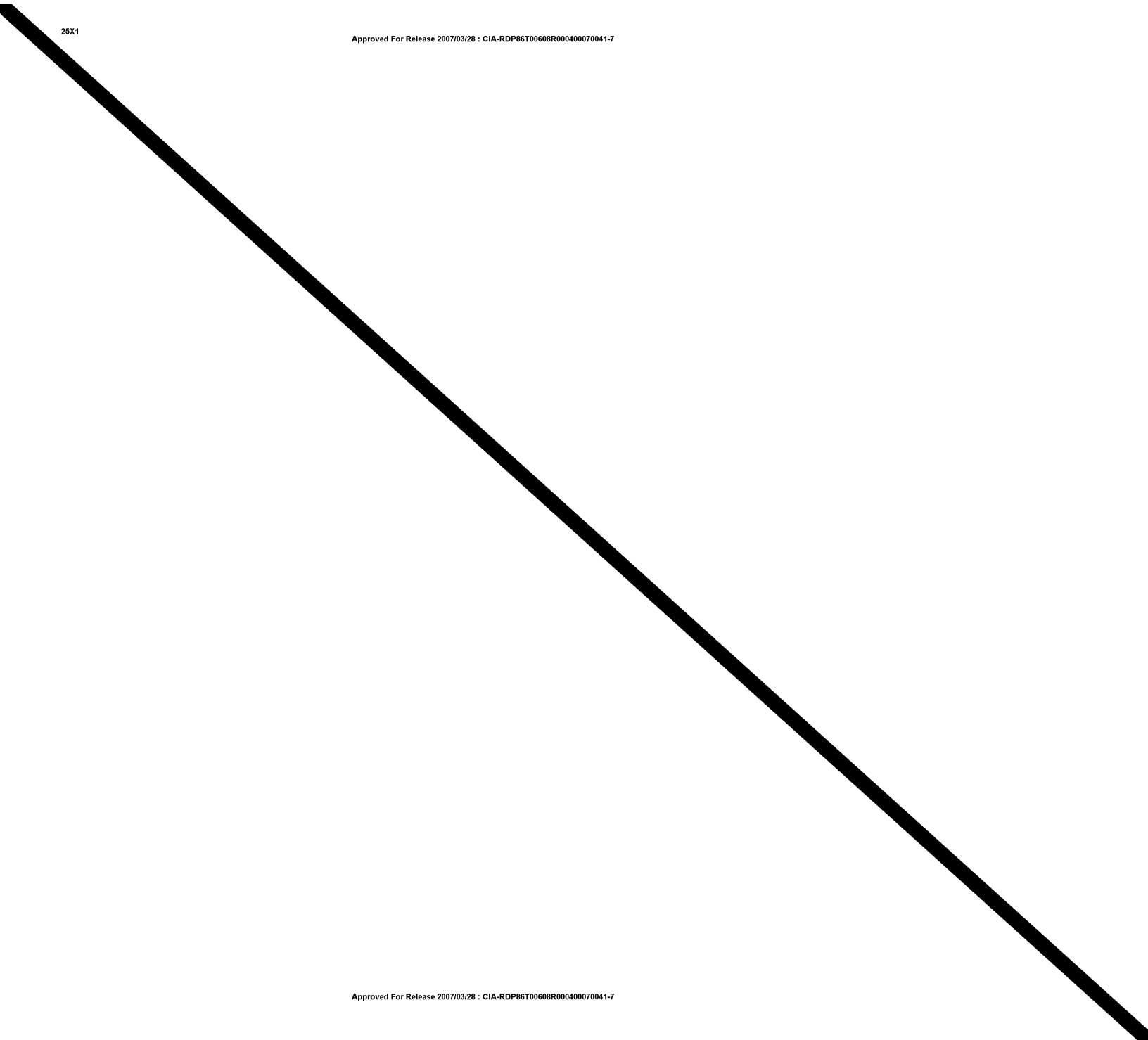

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STAFF NOTES:

Soviet Union
Eastern Europe

State Dept. review completed

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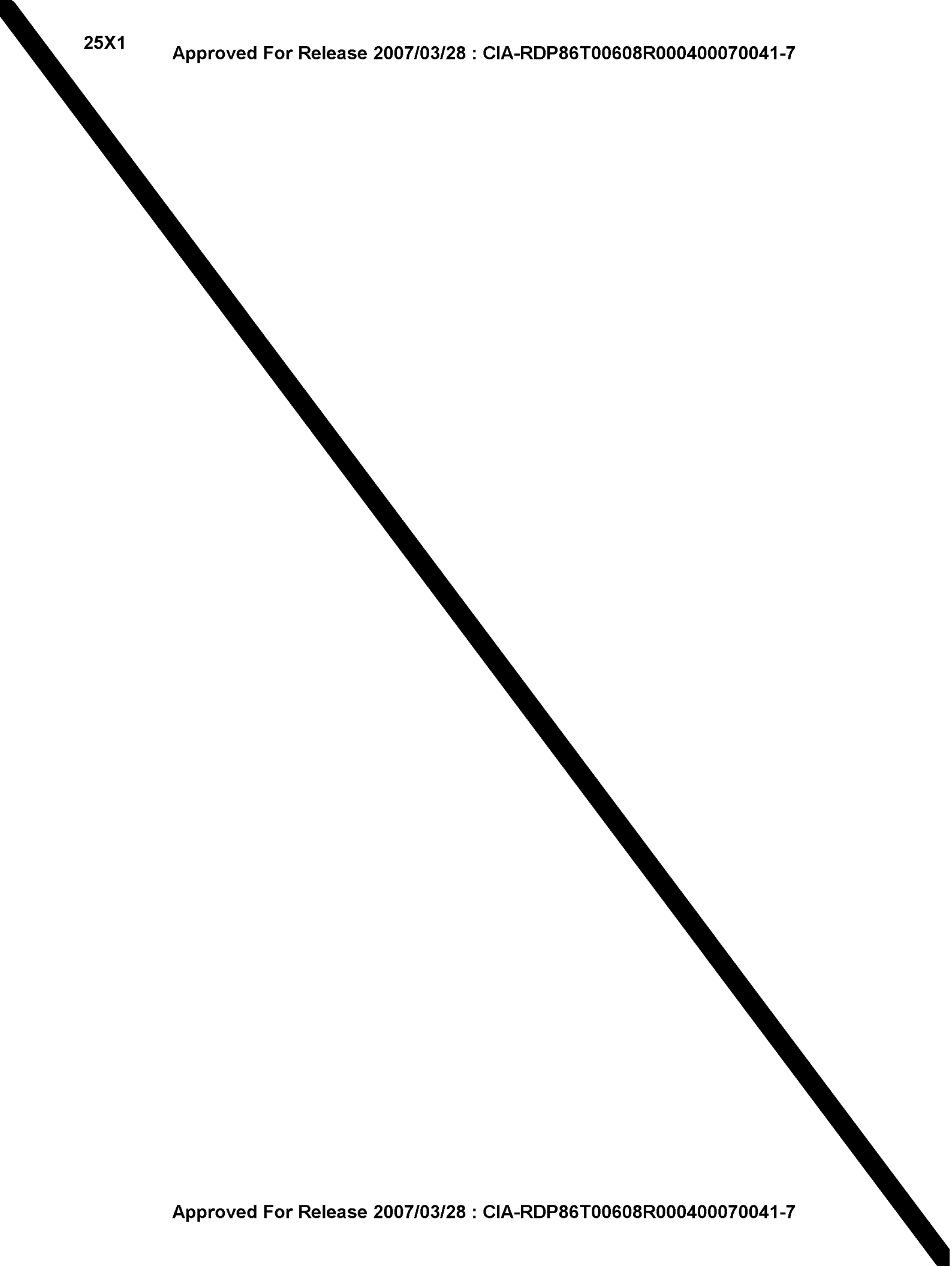

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SOVIET UNION - EASTERN EUROPE

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the USSR - Eastern Europe Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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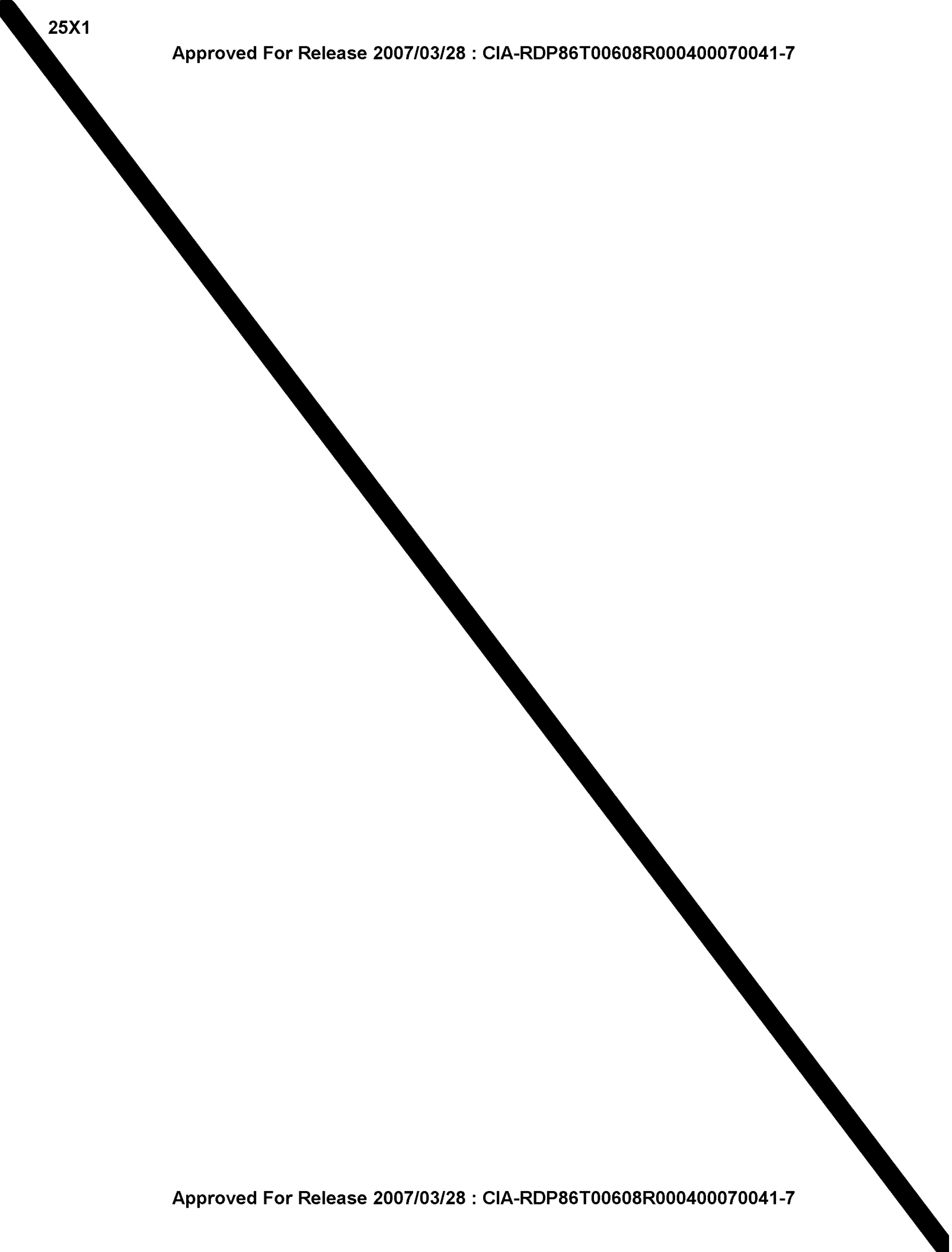

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Polish Miners Reportedly Restive in Katowice

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25X1 the miners have become increasingly open and vocal in complaining about pressures to meet production goals through extended working hours, including work on Sundays. The miners, who are the highest paid workers in Poland, are also allegedly unhappy about shortages of consumer goods and housing, and unsatisfactory pay scales.

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25X1 Problems with coal production have evidently led to some political infighting both in Katowice and at the national level. Last week Jan Mitrega lost his post as a deputy premier for some of the same reasons that had led to his removal as minister of mining and power last September.

Poland relies heavily on coal not only for the domestic production of energy, but also for the substantial amount of hard currency it earns. As a result--and despite serious shortages of skilled miners--the regime has urged miners to pledge production above plan figures. The US embassy in Warsaw last fall reported that employment in the mines is 16,000 below the desired level and that miners are clearly being "worked to the limit."

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Party leader Gierek is expected to take a direct and personal interest in the miners' problems. He himself was a minor and views Poland's miners as his own people. If the protests increase, he will go into the mines to listen to the complaints. Gierek recently told the Katowice party organization that it must continually be aware of and respond to public opinion.

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Vatican Foreign Minister Visits Czechoslovakia

The Czechoslovak regime rolled out the red carpet for a recent three-day visit of Archbishop Casaroli, the Vatican's foreign minister, but the "unofficial" talks apparently avoided sticky substantive issues. Although the Archbishop met with Czechoslovak officials in charge of church-state relations, the Italian press quotes a church source as saying the fundamental issues will not be discussed until a "different level" meets--possibly in Rome during May.

The talks with Foreign Minister Chnoupek received two days of unusual front-page coverage in the party daily, *Rude Pravo*, and prominent upbeat play in other Czechoslovak media. The newspaper articles stressed the "emphatically positive attitude" of the Vatican toward peace, suggesting that the regime sought the visit to gain support for its position at the European security talks.

Czechoslovak-Vatican negotiations have taken place sporadically over the past few years, but without much forward movement. The outstanding issues have been:

--Filling vacant bishoprics. There are only two resident bishops in the 13 dioceses, and the 76-year-old apostolic administrator of the important Prague archdiocese is nearing the mandatory age of retirement.

--The Vatican's opposition to meetings of the regime-sponsored organization "Pacem in Terris" at which earlier this year a pledge of loyalty to both the state and the Communist party was extracted from the Catholic clergy.

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--Religious teaching and the regime's active agitation for atheism.

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